Anthony Hopkins worked hard to capture the Nixon within him

BY BETSY PICKLE
BLADE MOVIE/VIDEO EDITOR

NEW YORK — Sir Anthony Hopkins is reusing something: half his silver hair.

"They shaved my head," says Hopkins, quickly anticipating questions about his half pate as he sits down to meet the press. "I'm playing Picasso. I finish filming this week in Paris. It's vanity that makes me explain myself."

Vanity, however, doesn't keep him from changing his look to meet the demands of his roles. Only credibility does, which is why he didn't go overboard to beef up his resemblance to Richard Milhous Nixon while playing the title role in director Oliver Stone's new film, Nixon.

"We discovered very early on through makeup tests that it wasn't gonna work," says Hopkins. "I said to Oliver Stone, 'I don't look anything like Nixon.' He said, 'No, but if you can get the essence of the guy, we can make you look something like him.' "

At first, Hopkins and the makeup artists tried to duplicate the look of Nixon's jowls and ski slope nose.

"It was terrible," Hopkins tells reporters at the Parker Meridien hotel. "If you add anything to your nose, you look like Cyrano de Bergerac. There was a sense of exaggeration because none of it would work. We'd already started filming some of the black-and-white stuff of early Nixon, and for one of the shots you can see me with a long nose."

Hopkins ended up with a short list of alterations: baldness, brown contact lenses, eyebrows, and capped teeth.

"I looked in the mirror," recalls Hopkins, whose navy suit with coordinated blue shirt and tie intensifies the blue of his eyes. "I thought, 'Well, I don't look exactly like him, but it's just to give a sketch, like a Picasso sketch.' That's all you've gotta do, and then let the audience's imagination work from there."

Hopkins immersed himself in films and audiotapes of Nixon in order to head a cast that includes Joan Allen as Pat Nixon, James Woods as H.R. Haldeman, J.T. Walsh as John Ehrlichman, David Hyde Pierce as John Dean, Paul Sorvino as Henry Kissinger, Powers Boothe as Alexander Haig and Bob Hoskins as J. Edgar Hoover.

"I spent about two hours a night watching, and then I'd play tapes as I'd go to sleep — things like the 'Checkers' speech or the final speech," says Hopkins, whose original Welsh lilt, "I'd listen for the hook in his voice, the defensiveness in his voice."

Though torn and, visceral, in Wales, Hopkins, who'll turn 56 on New Year's Eve, was keenly aware of Nixon's place in history long before he took on the role.

"I had my own opinions about the man before because I was very close to Watergate back in 1974," says Hopkins. "I was about to come to America in 1974 to work in New York on Broadway, and Watergate had just blown its top and Nixon resigned.

"I remember watching on television in England, listening to Nixon commentary by Alistair Cooke and interviews with Americans in Washington and New York — people saying, 'The guy should go to jail,' and others saying, 'Well, you know he did wrong, but ...' and then Gerry Ford's pardon. When I came to New York, it was, for me, a personal connection."

Hopkins' impression of Nixon was "that he was a real lone wolf, a real loner, in deep psychic pain. A really lonely man. A remarkable man. A deeply flawed human being — as everyone around this table is — with a lot of faults, a lot of weaknesses, a lot of strengths. Everything that the human being is — loving, compassionate, hateful — all those things that we all are.

"I've never met his family; I'd like to. I hear that his daughters worshiped him. But Nixon, I think, loved him in his own way. I think she was exhausted by him because he was relentlessly ambitious.

"I really admire him. I know what he did; he did some unspeakable things. The harming of Cambodia was horrible. But he would call it political expediency."

Nixon, whose funeral last year was attended by the four surviving former chief executives as well as President Clinton, was straight out of a Machiavellian model, Hopkins believes.

"Shakespeare reading back was Machiavelli's 'The Prince,' " notes Hopkins. And I think Nixon must have taken a lot from Shakespeare in order to achieve things, you have to be tough. And he was a tough man; he was a tough guy."

AFTER-CHRISTMAS BLOWOUT
20-70% OFF EVERYTHING!!!
BETTER THAN MAIL ORDER — ALMOST LIKE BUYING DIRECT!
5 DAYS ONLY!
TUESDAY thru SATURDAY
DECEMBER 26-30
Don't Miss Out! Huge Savings!
* DJ. Lighting — Wireless Systems
* Over 500 Guitars/Basses in Stock!
* Stacks of Amps & Sound Equipment!
* Main Showroom Jammed Full of Accessories
* Roland & Emerging Keyboards
* Tons & Tons of Accessories 40-50% Off
PEELER MUSIC & SOUND
2025 S.BYRNE AT HEATHERDOWNS

PLEASE, CAN YOU HELP AT CHRISTMAS?

Clip & mail with your gift today
YOU CAN HELP PROVIDE HOT, HOME-COOKED DINNERS, AND A SENSE OF FAMILY THROUGH YOUR GENEROUS GIFT.
$15.00 will help feed 10 hungry people
$30.00 will help feed 20 hungry people
$45.00 will help feed 30 hungry people
$75.00 will help feed 100 hungry people
YES!
Name
Address
City
State/ZIP
Cherry Street Mission Ministries
Thank You!

CELEBRATE NEW YEAR'S
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT at 9:30 P.M.
EARLY DINING
1st Setting 4:30 to 8:30
2nd Setting 6:30 to 8:30
PARTY SETTING
9 P.M. 'til CLOSE
$45 per person - includes Dinner, Breakfast at 2:30 A.M. & Favors.
ADVANCED PAYMENT REQUIRED
For Reservations Call
882-9229 - 11:30 to 4:30
Embers.
5453 MONROE ST.

FAT MAN NEEDED AS PHOTO MODEL

NOTHING ESCAPES AGFA FILM
BLUE RIBBON PHOTO
AGFA

ACCOMMODATION IN TOLEDO
At these accommodating restaurants, your table is always ready.

Wonderful food and a warm welcome await you at these local restaurants. Like hundreds of other restaurants in your area, they accommodate non-smokers and smokers in accordance with their preferences.
So no matter what your favorite cuisine, look for the green and red symbol of The Accommodation Program and be assured that your choice will be accommodated.
GOLDEN WOK RESTAURANT
SHORTER'S RESTAURANT
CHINA DRAGON
MYLES' PIZZA PUB
LONG JOHN SILVER'S
HILLS RESTAURANT
KYOHO
EAST OF CHICAGO PIZZA COMPANY
TONY PACKO'S CAFE
THE WATERING HOLE
TACO TICO
EAST STREET CAFE
BETTE'S FAMILY RESTAURANT
LONG SPRING GARDEN
DALE'S BAR & GRILL
MORRIS RESTAURANT & LOUNGE
GARDEN INN HOTEL
KETCH-A-BITE
GARDEN CAFE
SUBWAY
PAPA JOHN'S
CASEY'S PIZZA
DAMORE'S PIZZA & SUBS
THE ORIGINAL GINO'S PIZZA
HUNGRY HOWIE'S
BOWMAN BICYCLE CLUB #162
AL SMITH'S PLACE
BARNEY'S KNOTTY PINE DINER
BAKER'S PLACE
ANTHONY'S RESTAURANT
PONDEROSA STEAMHOUSE
JASON SKILLET RESTAURANT
JOHNNY'S HOT DOG
AL SMITH'S PLACE
PIZZA PALACE
CHINA GARDEN
STICKNEY HOT DOG
EL RANCHO MEXICAN RESTAURANT
Look for other ads listing accommodating establishments in the Toledo area. For free information about The Accommodation Program, and a complete list of participants in the Toledo area, please call 1-800-335-8444.
NON-SMOKERS AND SMOKERS WELCOME
Accommodation. It's a good sign.
The Accommodation Program. Courtesy of Philip Morris Incorporated

Source: https://www.industrydocuments.ucsf.edu/docs/qqfp0003